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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/719,959	11/21/2003	Paul J. Flanningan	59010US002	3577
32692	7590	11/01/2006	EXAMINER	
3M INNOVATIVE PROPERTIES COMPANY PO BOX 33427 ST. PAUL, MN 55133-3427			PATEL, NIHIR B	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			.3772	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



## DETAILED ACTION

### *Response to Arguments*

1. Applicant's arguments filed on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006, with respect to claims 1-23 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection(s) set forth in the previous office action has been withdrawn.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

4. Claims **1-7, 9-20, 22 and 23** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gleason et al. (US 6,016,804) in view of Scholey et al (US 6,298,849).

5. As to claims **1, 4, 13 and 22**, Gleason discloses the applicant's invention as claimed with the exception of providing a fluid communication component that is separately from the supporting portion of the face-piece insert. Scholey discloses an apparatus that does provide a fluid communication component that is separately from the supporting portion of the face-piece

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insert **26** (see **figure 1C**). Therefore it would have been obvious to modify Gleason's invention by providing a fluid communication component that is separately from the supporting portion of the face-piece insert as taught by Scholey so that it is impervious to fluid flow.

6. As to **claims 2 and 14**, Gleason teaches a method of securing a compliant face-contacting member **24** to the face-piece insert.

7. As to **claims 3 and 16**, Gleason teaches a method step of securing a harness to the mask body (see **figure 1**).

8. As to **claim 17**, Gleason teaches an apparatus that further includes a filter cartridge for supporting the mask body over a person's nose and mouth (see **column 2 lines 50-55**).

9. As to **claims 18 and 19**, Gleason teaches an apparatus wherein the fluid communication component comprises part of an inhalation/exhalation valve (see **column 6 lines 1-20**).

10. As to **claim 23**, Gleason teaches an apparatus that further comprises at least one filter cartridge that is secured to the mask body at a location where the fluid communication component resides (see **figure 1C**).

11. As to **claims 5-7, 9-12, 15 and 20**, close reading of the applicant's specification reveals that these components have always been close tolerance or critical elements therefore applicant's designation of critical elements does not carry any patentable weight.

12. **Claims 8 and 21** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gleason et al. (US 6,016,804) in view of Scholey and further in view of Fecteau et al. (US 6,497,232).

13. As to **claims 8 and 21**, closing reading of the applicant's specification (**page 7 lines 15-25**) reveals that the applicant has not established any criticality on why the supporting portion and the fluid communication component must be fused together and therefore it would be

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obvious to one in the ordinary skill of the art to use the fusing process or any other process as stated by Fecteau to assemble the two component.

*Conclusion*

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nihir Patel whose telephone number is (571) 272-4803. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 to 4:30 every other Fridays off.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patricia Bianco can be reached on (571) 272-4940. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Nihir Patel

  
10/30/07